

STATE SENATOR

# John A. Kissel

Dear Neighbor,

*On May 7th, the 2008 Session of the Connecticut General Assembly came to an end. This year the legislature passed a number of measures that will benefit the residents of North Central Connecticut. From enhancing public safety to providing mortgage relief to affording more long term care for our seniors, we have made great strides in improving the lives of all our state's residents.*

*I am also pleased to report that in a bipartisan manner the legislature made major changes to our state's criminal justice system. As one of the most important issues facing our state, it was imperative that we put aside our differences to make sure these reforms were enacted into law.*

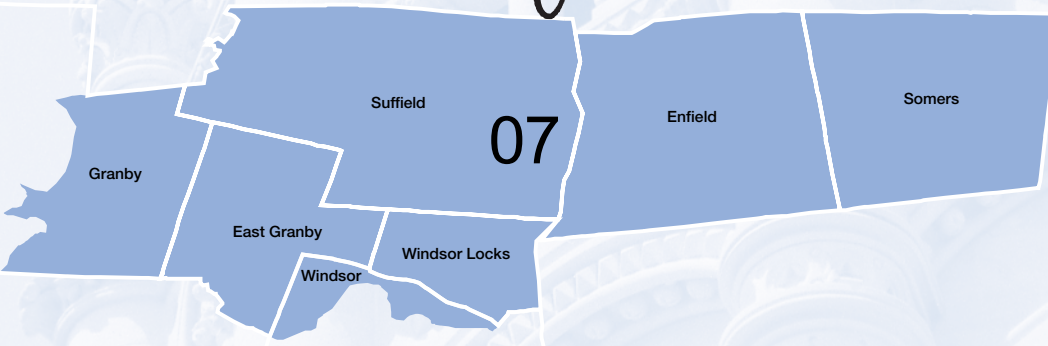
*Much has been accomplished this year, but challenges remain. While the legislature did not raise taxes in 2008, the rising cost of oil and gasoline is one of the biggest issues we have faced in a generation, and it presents us with our greatest challenge in the next legislative session.*

*If you have any questions regarding these issues or any other issue concerning state government, please do not hesitate to contact me.*

*Thank you for your kind support and the great honor of representing you in Hartford.*

Your Friend,

*John A. Kissel*



*John with his wife Cindy and sons Nathaniel and Tristan on the last day of Session, 2008*

John.A.Kissel@cga.ct.gov

(text telephone for the hearing impaired)

TTY 860-240-0163

240-0531

Hartford, CT 06106 - 1591

Room 3400

Legislative Office Building

Senator John A. Kissel

How to Reach Me:

[www.SenatorKissel.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorKissel.cga.ct.gov)



STATE SENATOR  
**John A. Kissel**  
Enfield ★ East Granby ★ Granby ★ Somers ★ Suffield  
Windsor ★ Windsor Locks

PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit # 3937  
Hartford, CT  
06106



## 2008 Legislative Report

Enfield ★ East Granby ★ Granby ★ Somers  
Suffield ★ Windsor ★ Windsor Locks



# Criminal Justice Reform

As Ranking Senator on the legislature’s Judiciary Committee, I was honored to help write legislation that makes comprehensive changes to our state’s criminal justice system. In January, the legislature met in a Special Session and established a new felony offense of “home invasion.” The new law also increases the penalties for nighttime burglaries. What’s more, we were able to strengthen the state’s parole process by instituting full time Parole Board members and requiring the GPS monitoring of 300 more parolees.

In May, the legislature took aim at persistent felony offenders by overwhelmingly passing a measure I co-sponsored that doubles and even triples the sentences of dangerous felons. Under the law, \$10 million has been appropriated for additional prosecutors, GPS tracking, alternative housing and mental health services.

While a measure I proposed to increase our correction officer ranks by 125 did not pass due to budget constraints, I will continue to work to make sure issues concerning prison overcrowding and staffing are solved.

# Teenage Driving

In March I attended an assembly at Suffield High School with the non-profit organization Mourning Parents ACT, (*IMPACT*™) whose mission is to eliminate tragedies caused by inexperienced drivers. This event had a profound effect on me and I felt it more important now than ever to co-sponsor legislation to improve the safety of teen drivers. The new law doubles from 20 hours to 40 hours the amount of behind the wheel, on-road training a 16- or 17-year-old must receive before qualifying for a license, requires a parent or guardian to attend two hours of instruction on teen driving laws and changes the curfew hours from midnight to 11 p.m. Please visit my website, [www.SenatorKissel.cga.ct.gov](http://www.SenatorKissel.cga.ct.gov), for more information on the new laws.



*John greets a young visitor at a recent KITE (Key Initiatives To Early Education) meeting at Prudence Crandall Elementary School in Enfield.*



# Land Preservation / Open Space

North Central Connecticut is home to some of the state’s most valuable farmland. This year the legislature created property tax exemptions for nonprofit organizations that own and preserve open space. The legislation also assists municipalities in assessing contaminated property. In addition, the “Face of Connecticut” account was created to allow for public and private investments in preservation. It also allows the state Commissioner of Agriculture to create a community farms program to preserve farmland not eligible under other preservation programs.



*John poses in the Senate Chamber with a group of students from Poquonock School in Windsor during their visit to the Capitol.*

# Child Product Safety

This year the legislature created new standards for toys being sold here in Connecticut that will ensure the safety of our children. The measure received the support of local toy manufacturers such as LEGO in Enfield. The new law, which I helped introduce and co-sponsored, establishes limits for toxins in children’s products under the state’s Child Protection Act and bans toys that fail to comply with these limits. The bill requires the state Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to compile a list of toys that contain banned hazardous substances and make it available online to all residents.



*John shakes hands with a veteran after Memorial Day services in Suffield.*

# Issues Affecting Our Seniors

As a leader in the fight to expand home and community based choices, it is my belief that senior residents and people with disabilities should have options available so that they can choose the most appropriate setting for their care. Last year I helped to create a new program that allows for state participation in the federal “Money Follows the Person” program, which enabled up to 700 eligible state nursing home residents to transition into less restrictive community-based settings. I am pleased to report that this year, legislation that I co-sponsored will increase the number of persons who can benefit from this program from 700 to 5,000.



*CT-AARP President Don Ciosek presents John with an award for his leadership regarding Long Term Care for our seniors.*



*This year John attended Memorial Day events in Somers, Enfield and Suffield. Here, John marches alongside State Representative Ruth Fahrback in Suffield.*

# Challenges Ahead

Without question the biggest issue facing our nation is the skyrocketing cost of gasoline. As a member of the Connecticut Peak Oil and Natural Gas Caucus, I am aware of the negative effect high gas prices are having on our economy. Prices for just about everything have risen due to high fuel costs, and families and businesses alike are feeling the pinch. As a state, we need to do our part to ensure that everything is being done to help alleviate pain at the pump.

In June, the legislature met in Special Session and canceled the July 1st scheduled increase to the Petroleum Products Gross Earnings Tax on gasoline. This was a good first step, but we need to rethink how we tax gasoline in Connecticut. Going forward, we should be looking for ways to attract out of state shoppers into Connecticut, not forcing our own people to look to save money on gas and other items in Massachusetts.